

Message Text

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T - SLEDOGAR
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EUR/NE:SWORRELL(DRAFT)
S - HAL COLLUMS
S/S:MR. SEBASTIAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 313049 TOSEC 340120

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BC, RH, SF, US

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM: BOTSWANA SECURITY PROBLEM
(S/S - 7626263)

TO THE SECRETARY FROM AF SCHAUFELLE

1. THE PROBLEM

RHODESIAN INCURSIONS INTO BOTSWANA ARE FORCING THE OFFICIALS
OF THE GOVERNMENT OF BOTSWANA (GOB) TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY
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CREATING A LARGER DEFENSE FORCE FOR THEIR COUNTRY. THIS
WOULD DIVERT ITS LIMITED RESOURCES FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
WHILE NOT NECESSARILY CREATING A CREDIBLE DETERRENT TO
AGGRESSION.

WE MUST DECIDE: (1) WHETHER TO SEEK TO ALLEVIATE THE
RHODESIAN PRESSURES ON BOTSWANA BY INTERVENING WITH THE
SOUTH AFRICANS; (2) WHETHER TO OFFER ANY SECURITY ASSISTANCE
TO BOTSWANA; OR (3) WHETHER TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS, IN PARTI-
CULAR THE BRITISH, TO SUPPLY THE ARMS. OUR CHOICE SHOULD

TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION OUR TOTAL ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

2. BACKGROUND

FACED WITH A 25 PERCENT DECLINE IN REAL REVENUES IN THE 1976/77 FISCAL YEAR, THE GOB WOULD HAVE TO MAKE AN EVEN GREATER CUT IN ITS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ITS MILITARY CAPABILITY. OWING TO ITS DESIRE NOT TO REDUCE THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, THE GOB IS LOOKING FOR FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE, PREFERABLY FROM ITS WESTERN FRIENDS.

BOTSWANA'S ONLY SECURITY FORCE IS A 400-MAN, POORLY ARMED, POLICE MOBILE UNIT, WHICH THE GOB IS TRYING TO IMPROVE WITH THE PURCHASE OF 400 AUTOMATIC RIFLES FROM A BRITISH FIRM. EVEN WITH NEW WEAPONS THE PRESENT FORCE WOULD HAVE TO TRIPLE IN SIZE, ACCORDING TO AN INTELLIGENCE REPORT, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A REASONABLE DEGREE OF SECURITY TO BOTSWANA'S CITIZENS LIVING NEAR THE RHODESIAN BORDER.

RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES HAVE ESTABLISHED AN OPERATIONAL AREA ON THE BOTSWANAN BORDER, WHERE THEY ENGAGE IN "HOT PURSUIT" OF GUERRILLAS FLEEING INTO BOTSWANA. INCREASINGLY SERIOUS INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE DECEMBER 11 KIDNAPPING OF THREE BATSWANA, AND THE DECEMBER 18 ATTACK ON THE REFUGEE CAMP AND POLICE MOBILE UNIT CAMP IN FRANCIS-CONFIDENTIAL

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TOWN, HAVE AROUSED DEEP CONCERN IN GABORONE. PRESIDENT KHAMA HAS DECIDED TO APPEAL TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL FOR ASSISTANCE AGAINST RHODESIAN AGGRESSION. THE COUNCIL WILL PROBABLY MEET ON THE MATTER IN JANUARY.

SINCE BOTSWANA'S INDEPENDENCE, PRESIDENT KHAMA HAS WALKED A TIGHT ROPE BETWEEN BLACK NATIONALIST GROUPS AND THE GOVERNMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND RHODESIA. BOTSWANA GRANTS POLITICAL ASYLUM TO REFUGEES FROM NEIGHBORING STATES, WHILE DENYING THEM THE OPPORTUNITY TO USE BOTSWANA AS A LAUNCHING PAD FOR MILITARY ATTACKS. PRIVATELY, BOTSWANAN OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT GUERRILLAS FLEE INTO BOTSWANA, BUT THEY DENY THAT THEY CAN CONTROL SUCH MOVEMENT. THEY ALSO STRONGLY DENY ALLOWING ANY GUERRILLA BASES ON THEIR TERRITORY.

RECENT INCURSIONS BY RHODESIAN FORCES MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR PRESIDENT KHAMA TO MAINTAIN THIS POLICY. HE IS BEING PRESSED HARD BY MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY, MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES IN BOTSWANA, AND BY LEADERS OF MORE LEFTIST GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION TO ADOPT A MORE ACTIVIST POLICY. THE FAILURE OF HIS POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO KEEP EITHER THE RHODESIANS OR THE NATIONALIST

GUERRILLAS FROM ENTERING BOTSWANA LEAVE HIM LITTLE ROOM TO MANEUVER. CONTINUED INCURSIONS INTO BOTSWANA COULD WEAKEN HIS MODERATE INFLUENCE, AS WELL AS THAT OF HIS CLOSE FRIEND KAUNDA, AMONG THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS.

3. POSSIBLE COURSES OF ACTION

(A) DIPLOMATIC EFFORT WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS

WE COULD ASSIST PRESIDENT KHAMA IN BRINGING THE SOUTH
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AFRICANS INTO PLAY. THE GOB HAS ALREADY ASKED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (SAG) FOR DIPLOMATIC ASSISTANCE WITH THE RHODESIANS, BUT IS SKEPTICAL OF RESULTS EVEN THOUGH THE SAG IS TRYING TO BE RESPONSIVE. FROM A CONVERSATION WITH OUR AMBASSADOR IN GABORONE, IT IS CLEAR THAT BOTSWANAN OFFICIALS WOULD WELCOME OUR INTERVENTION WITH THE SAG. IF WE RAISED THE ISSUE WITH THE SAG, IT WOULD SERVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ITS ROLE OF PROMOTING DIPLOMATIC SOLUTIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THIS WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT YOU HAVE ALREADY SAID TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS ABOUT RHODESIAN INCURSIONS ELSEWHERE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

IF WE PURSUED THIS OPTION, THE FOLLOWING THREE POINTS COULD BE MADE TO THE RHODESIAN AUTHORITIES:

(1) THE GOB MAKES A SINCERE EFFORT TO CONTROL REFUGEES ON ITS TERRITORY AND TO FORBID USE OF BOTSWANA AS A "LAUNCHING PAD" FOR GUERRILLA ATTACKS ON RHODESIA;

(2) VIOLATIONS OF BOTSWANAN TERRITORY FROM RHODESIA ARE THE PRINCIPAL, IF NOT THE SOLE, REASON FOR THE CURRENT GOB CALL FOR AN ARMS BUILD-UP, IN WHICH NEITHER THE U.S. NOR ANY OTHER WESTERN COUNTRY MAY BE THE PRINCIPAL SUPPLIER; AND

(3) RAIDS AND OTHER BORDER VIOLATIONS FROM RHODESIA WILL LIKELY RESULT IN AN INFLUX OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND ARMS, THE VERY RESULT THAT RHODESIA, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT, AND CONCERNED WESTERN COUNTRIES ARE TRYING TO PREVENT.

(B) BILATERAL FOREIGN MILITARY SALES

IF A DIPLOMATIC EFFORT IS NOT FEASIBLE, OR PERHAPS IN COMBINATION WITH A DIPLOMATIC EFFORT, WE MAY WANT TO CONSIDER A FOREIGN MILITARY SALES (FMS) PROGRAM FOR
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BOTSWANA. BECAUSE OF BOTSWANA'S LONG BORDERS, SMALL POPULATION AND INABILITY TO DEFEND ITSELF EFFECTIVELY--EVEN WITH ADDITIONAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE--SUCH A PROGRAM WOULD NECESSARILY BE MORE SYMBOLIC THAN REAL. IT WOULD NEVERTHELESS OFFER US A TIMELY OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE OUR SUPPORT, IN REAL TERMS, FOR A MODERATE, MULTI-RACIAL AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. THIS WOULD HAVE A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT ON KHAMA AND WOULD SIGNAL OUR DETERMINATION TO STAND BY OUR FRIENDS.

NEVERTHELESS, ESTABLISHMENT OF AN FMS PROGRAM WOULD HAVE A NUMBER OF SERIOUS DRAWBACKS. WHILE BOTSWANA HAS DISCUSSED ITS SECURITY PROBLEM WITH US, IT HAS NOT FORMALLY REQUESTED US TO FURNISH SECURITY ASSISTANCE, NOR IS IT NOW ELIGIBLE TO PURCHASE ARMS THROUGH FMS. IT MAY, HOWEVER, MAKE PURCHASES THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS SUBJECT TO EXPORT LICENSING BY MUNITIONS CONTROL. FMS ELIGIBILITY REQUIRES A FINDING BY THE PRESIDENT THAT THE SALE OF DEFENSE ARTICLES AND SERVICES TO BOTSWANA "WILL STRENGTHEN THE SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES AND PROMOTE WORLD PEACE."

A PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION IS LIKELY TO AROUSE CONTROVERSY. ALL SUCH ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS ARE REPORTED TO THE CONGRESS AND PUBLISHED IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER. IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS OF US SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES WOULD REACT NEGATIVELY TO ADDING BOTSWANA TO THE LIST OF COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR FMS. IN ADDITION, THE BOTSWANA DETERMINATION WOULD PROVIDE CERTAIN MEMBERS OF CONGRESS THE OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION THE ADMINISTRATION'S BASIC POLICY OBJECTIVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. A NUMBER OF CONGRESSMEN, HOWEVER, ARE LIKELY TO BE INCLINED TO FAVOR THE PROVISION OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO PREEMPT THE SOVIETS. THERE IS NO FMS FINANCING PLANNED FOR BOTSWANA IN FY 77
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NOR INCLUDED IN THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED PROGRAM FOR FY 78.

FMS ELIGIBILITY FOR BOTSWANA AT THIS TIME COULD HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. IT COULD SIGNAL TO ALL OBSERVERS OUR CONCERN OVER RHODESIAN RAIDS INTO BOTSWANA.

(C) MULTILATERAL (ESSENTIALLY BRITISH) SECURITY ASSISTANCE

A MORE PRUDENT APPROACH MAY BE TO DISCUSS WITH THE BRITISH, AND OTHER ALLIES AS APPROPRIATE, THE NATURE OF

THE THREAT TO BOTSWANA AND TO URGE THE BRITISH (AND OTHER WESTERN NATIONS) TO PROVIDE MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND TRAIN-

ING TO BOTSWANA'S SMALL FORCES. IF WE UNDERTOOK THIS OPTION, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT THE BRITISH AND PERHAPS OTHER EUROPEANS WOULD SUPPLY THE BULK OF THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT NEEDED BY BOTSWANA AND THAT WHILE WE MIGHT HELP OUT, WE WOULD DO SO ONLY TO A LIMITED EXTENT. THE DIFFICULTY OF THIS APPROACH IS THAT THE BRITISH MAY BE SEVERELY CONSTRAINED BY THEIR OWN FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. WE HAVE NO AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE ANY FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE UK OR TO BOTSWANA FOR NON-US EQUIPMENT OR SERVICES.

(D) TAKE NO ACTION

THE POSSIBLE PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY ASKING THE SOUTH AFRICANS FOR DIPLOMATIC ASSISTANCE AND THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH INITIATING A SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM MAKE A POSITION OF NON-INVOLVEMENT ATTRACTIVE. THE DISADVANTAGE, HOWEVER, IS THAT A PASSIVE POSITION WILL PROBABLY BE PERCEIVED BY PRESIDENT KHAMA AND KEY MEMBERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT AS US INSENSITIVITY TO THE CRISIS FACING BOTSWANA. LACK OF SUPPORT FROM ANY WESTERN NATION MAY
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WE'LL LEAVE KHAMA WITH NO OTHER CHOICE BUT TO SEEK ASSISTANCE FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES.

IN A DECEMBER 17 PRESS CONFERENCE IN LUSAKA THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO BOTSWANA AND ZAMBIA SAID THE USSR WAS PREPARED, IF REQUESTED, TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO BOTSWANA TO REPEL RHODESIAN INTRUDERS. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT COULD UNDERMINE OUR REGIONAL INTEREST IN HAVING PRESIDENT KHAMA CONTINUE TO PLAY A MODERATE ROLE AMONG THE FRONT LINE PRESIDENTS.

4. PM VIEWS

(A) PM DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CURRENT SITUATION IS SUFFICIENTLY URGENT TO REQUIRE ACTION BY THIS ADMINISTRATION. FURTHERMORE, AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, BOTSWANA HAS NOT FORMALLY REQUESTED THE US TO FURNISH SECURITY ASSISTANCE. ANY IMMEDIATE FMS PROGRAM TO THE SMALL BOTSWANAN PARA-MILITARY FORCE WOULD HAVE TO BE RESTRICTED TO LIGHT ARMS WHOSE EFFECTIVENESS WOULD BE LIMITED. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, PM BELIEVES THAT WE SHOULD FIRST EXHAUST ALL DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS BEFORE CONSIDERING EMBARKING ON A COURSE OF ACTION WHICH COULD INTRODUCE THE USG AS A MAJOR ARMS SUPPLIER TO BOTSWANA. PM DOES NOT OPPOSE THE ISSUANCE OF EXPORT LICENSES FOR LIMITED COMMERCIAL SALES.

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

(A) THAT WE INSTRUCT AMBASSADOR BOWDLER TO HAVE THE

SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT URGE THE RHODESIANS TO DISCONTINUE INCURSIONS INTO BOTSWANA IN ORDER TO LIMIT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN THE AREA. (AF, PM, AND H SUPPORT THIS OPTION.)

APPROVE:
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DISAPPROVE:

(B). IN ADDITION TO A DIPLOMATIC EFFORT THAT WE URGE THE BRITISH AND OTHER EUROPEAN STATES TO PROVIDE THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE NEEDED, WITH THE USG POSSIBLY PLAYING A CONTRIBUTING ROLE--HOPEFULLY IN SUCH A MANNER THAT WOULD NOT REQUIRE A PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION, BUT NOT PRECLUDING GOING FOR A PD IF THIS IS DEEMED DESIRABLE. (AF SUPPORTS THIS COURSE OF ACTION AS DOES PM PROVIDED THE USG IS NOT INVOLVED).

APPROVE :

DISAPPROVE:

WE COULD ALSO INDICATE OUR SUPPORT OF GOB, WITHOUT A PD, BY INFORMING IT AND OUR ALLIES THAT USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO APPROVE THE EXPORT OF REASONABLE QUANTITIES OF US ORIGIN ITEMS PURCHASED BY THE GOB THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS. (PM & AF SUPPORT THIS COURSE OF ACTION).

APPROVE:

DISAPPROVE:

(C) ALTERNATIVELY, THAT WE PLAN FOR A BILATERAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR WHICH WE WOULD SEEK A PRESIDENTIAL DETERMINATION, MAKING BOTSWANA ELIGIBLE FOR FMS PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING.

APPROVE:

DISAPPROVE:

(D) ALTERNATIVELY, THAT WE NEITHER SEEK SOUTH AFRICAN
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COOPERATION IN STOPPING RHODESIAN INCURSIONS INTO

BOTSWANA NOR SEEK TO ASSIST BOTSWANA IN STRENGTHENING ITS MILITARY POSTURE.

APPROVE:

DISAPPROVE:

6. DRAFTED BY, AF/S:RPERRY. CLEARED BY, AF - AMB.
SEELYE; PM -RERICSON (DRAFT); H-SGOLDBERG (DRAFT;
D/HA-MSPEAR (DRAFT); L/PM-TBOREK (DRAFT; EUR/NE-SWORRELL
(DRAFT); T-SLEDOGAR. S-HCOLLUMS

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